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## Sustainable Teacher Development Programmes For Effective Teaching In Public And Private Secondary Schools In Abia State, Nigeria

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Effective implementation of any programme, especially that of improving the performance of the teacher, no doubt depends largely on continuous development and update of relevant educational materials. While many nations around the world have embraced, the need for education to achieve sustainability, only limited progress has been made at the level of secondary education, especially in Abia State. This limited progress emanate from many sources. In some cases, lack of vision or awareness has impeded progress, in others; it is lack of policy or funding. It then requires the government at all levels addressing issues that are specific to the immediate or local conditions. For example, the quality of relationships between the school principals and the teachers is an area that requires attention.

Education for sustainable development is recognized to be very important and central to the success of sustainable development all over the world. The main aim should be to devise new ways of looking at the future of the secondary schools, what is happening in the schools, and taking part in the resolution of the problems and issues at stake. That a school is doing well depends on how well the school is able to handle experience, reflections, innovations and co-operations. The schools culture should be such that, the new experience, reflections, innovations have to be incorporated in the school, so that the ways people interact and do things have to change. It is the duty of school principals to facilitate such processes. The principals should aim at organizing the school in such a way that there is understanding among staff. The principal is expected to understand the theory and practice of the school as a learning environment. To achieve sustainable development in education therefore, there should be an opportunity created for teachers to improve on the existing methods of teaching and learning by providing innovations that can be useful to the entire school system.

Educating for sustainable future will entail, improving the quality of basic education, re-orienting education to address sustainability, improving public awareness and providing training to many sectors of the society. With the ongoing interest in education for sustainable development, there is need to produce high quality training and resources for teacher development. There is need to develop a programme that will engage a team of curriculum developers to work with teachers to develop a good professional development programme, that will be based on improving the existing professional development efforts. The development programme should ensure that teachers develop the right values and attitudes and are equipped to perform their roles and responsibilities effectively. Madumere-Obike (2007) is of the opinion that a dedicated teacher has little or no time to rest on his oars, if he does, he will go down the stream. Continual teacher development programme is required because the knowledge and skills that teachers acquired during their initial training is unlikely to last them through their entire career. During the development programmes, there are interchanges between teachers. Teachers acquire authentic learning experiences, which according to Lave and Blenger (1991), allows students to genuinely engage in processes of practitioners which can lead to meaningful and long lasting learning for sustainability. Not only do teacher education institutions educate new teachers, they also update the knowledge and skills of in-serving teachers, create teacher education curriculum, provide professional development for practicing teachers, consult schools and often provide expert

opinion to state and local Ministries of Education, and all those who have significant impact on what occurs in schools. Therefore, development programmes should be provided for teachers to constantly upgrade the teachers so that they can stay abreast of new development beyond their foundation stage in their areas of specialization.

## The Problem

In recent years, a variety of professional development programmes have been fashioned to upgrade the serving teachers for the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme. For instance there are many colleges and institutions that offer in-service training programmes in education. Some agencies such as the British Council, Ministries of Education, State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and even professional organizations run workshops, seminars, induction courses for practicing teachers. Most teachers benefit from such programmes while some teachers do not care about them. While there are some empirical studies on how these programmes have affected teachers, there is very little research on how principals who work directly with these teachers perceive the effectiveness of these programmes. Yet these teachers are often supervised by their principals in the teaching learning process. Consequently this paper focuses on the perception of principals, who directly work with the serving teachers who benefits from such programmes, on the development programmes that these teachers undergo. Five research questions were posed for the study.

1. What are the roles of principals towards teachers' participation in teacher development programmes.
2. To what extent does the involvement of teachers in development programmes, motivate teachers to perform their duties effectively?
3. To what extent does the development programmes assist teachers in acquiring effective and sustainable pedagogies for achieving the goals of secondary education?
4. What are the constraints to teacher development programmes?
5. How can teacher development programmes be improved upon?

Three hypotheses were postulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference between the public and private secondary school principals on their perception of their roles in teacher development programmes for their teachers.
2. There is no significant difference between the public and private school principal's perception on involving teachers in development programmes as a motivating factor to teachers' performance of their duties.
3. There is no significance difference in the perception of public and private school principals on the development programmes assisting teachers in the acquisition of effective and sustainable teaching pedagogies.

## Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey which seeks to obtain information from public and private secondary school principals in Abia State, on their perception on sustainable teacher development programme for effective teaching. A representative sample of 100 principals (50 from public and 50 from private schools) were randomly selected from secondary schools across the three educational zones of Abia State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to reflect the three zones, namely Aba, Umuahia and Ohafia (15, 15, 10 respectively). The zoning of the state was to ensure that the sampling of schools was not biased in favour or disfavour of any section of the state. It also afforded the practical convenience of not having to visit every part of the state for collection of data. The data for the analysis were gathered using structured interview and an instrument named Principals Perception of Sustainable Teacher Development Programmes Questionnaire (PPSTDPQ). It was validated and its reliability co-efficient established at .88. PPSTDPQ sought information on the differences in perception of principals in the areas of their roles, motivation, benefits, areas of emphasis and constraints to teacher development programmes. The items were grouped into four sections A – D. Each item had a 5 point Likert Scale set against it. The response system range from very high to very low for Research questions 2 – 3 and strongly agree to strongly disagree for Research questions 1, 4 and 5. Each respondent was required to indicate the extent to which he agrees with each statement. The mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while the hypotheses posed for the study were tested by the computation of mean and the application of t-test for independent samples. Research questions 1 – 3 and their corresponding hypotheses were treated in combine operations.

## Findings

On what the Principals of Public and Private Secondary Schools perceive as their roles in teacher development programmes for their teachers, the analysis of the data showed that there was no significant difference. This is shown in table I.

Table I: T-test for difference between Public and Private School Principals on their roles in teacher development Programmes for their teachers.

Subject	N		SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Conclusion
Public	50	28.90	11.28					
				98	1.02	1.98	0.0309	NS
Private	50	26.90	11.02					

NS = Non-Signified  $P > 0.5$

Table I indicates that at .05 level of significance, the calculated t-value of 1.02, is less than the critical value of 1.96 for significance difference. Given the degree of freedom of 98, a P-value as high as 0.309 was actually observed. At a glance, it is clear that both public and private school principals did not differ

in their perception of their roles towards teacher participation in development programmes. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the inference was drawn as stated above.

On whether public and private school principals perceive involving teachers in development programmes as motivating teachers in the performance of their duties, there was no significant difference. This is shown in table 2.

Table 2: t-test of difference between public and private school principals perception on involving teachers in development programmes being a motivating factor

Subject	N		SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Conclusion
		<input type="checkbox"/>						
Public	50	54.3	16.90					
				98	0.98	1.96	0.0243	NS
Private	50	50.8	19.98					

NS = Non-Signified  $P > 0$

Table 2 shows that the principals from public schools obtained a higher mean score of 54.3 while those from Private Schools obtained a mean of 50.8, on their extent of involving teachers in development programmes being a motivating factor for teachers in the performance of their duties. Again, the data shows that, at a glance, the groups did not differ in their opinion. The observed t-test value of 0.98 was less than 1.96 the critical t-value for significant difference at 0.05 level. Given a degree of freedom of 98, a P-value of 0.243 was actually observed, showing that, it was not significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted at the .05 level. The inference was drawn as stated above.

The objective of whether Public and Private school principals perceive development programmes as that of assisting teachers in acquiring effective and sustainable teaching pedagogies for achieving the goals of education. The result of the analysed data in table 3 clearly shows this.

Table 3: t-test analysis of Public and Private School Principals on the benefits of teacher development programmes

Subject	N		SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	P	Conclusion
		<input type="checkbox"/>						
Public	50	35	14.36					

			98	0.74	1.98	0.0462	NS
Private	50	32.8	15.43				

NS = Non-Significant  $P > .05$

Table 3 reveals that at 0.5 percent level of significance and 98 degree of freedom, the calculated  $t$  (0.74) is less than the critical  $t$  (1.98). Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted. This implies that, no significant difference existed in the opinion of public and private school Principals on teacher participation in development programmes assisting the teachers in acquiring effective and sustainable teaching pedagogies.

Table 4: Indicates the opinion of Public and Private School Principals on the constraints to teacher development programmes.

Indicators		Public	Private	Decision
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1	Insufficient fund	3.40	4.00	Agree
2	Lack of facilities and equipment	3.80	3.40	Agree
3	Non-challant attitude by Administrators	3.40	3.00	Agree
4	Poor School environment	3.60	3.00	Agree
5	Non-encouragement by State Government	3.66	3.40	Agree
Total Mean		3.57	3.36	Agree

Criterion mean = 2.50

Table 4 provided answers to the research question which dealt with the constraints to teacher development programmes for sustainable secondary education. The principals from public schools had an overall mean score of 3.57 while those from private schools had 3.36, which fell above the criterion mean of 2.50. Both principals from public and private schools agreed that insufficient fund, inadequate facilities and equipment, non-challant attitude by administrators, poor school environment and non

encouragement by the state government are constraints to teacher development programmes for sustainability. However, principals from private schools scored lack of funds very high (4.00) as against 3.40 for principals from public schools.

On the area of emphasis during the development programmes, that will be of immense benefit to teachers in the performance of their duties. Majority of the principals suggested the following areas (a) information communication and technology ICT, (b) modern pedagogies that will help the teachers to assist the students in acquiring entrepreneurial skills to enable them to be self reliant, (c) support of the local and State Government (d) support by the Parents Teachers Association.

## Discussion

The finding that principals from public and private secondary schools did not perceive their roles differently is an indication that both groups have an understanding that their role is that of encouraging the teachers by recommending them for such programmes. The principals agreed that development programmes such as in-service training, seminars, workshops and teacher competency evaluation are available for teachers. However these development programmes are more in public schools than in private schools. The reason for this extensive encouragement might be because, the programmes helps the teachers to update their skills for effective teaching and learning. This finding is in line with Ehiozuwa (2005) who reported that availability of teacher development programmes is in the right direction as it helps to improve teachers' classroom effectiveness. It is during these programmes that teachers reshape the existing programme by drawing on new knowledge and previous expertise. These development programmes is necessary for sustainability to be attained.

Secondly, that both public and private school' principals perceive involving teachers in development programmes as a motivating factor which enables teachers to perform their duties creditably is not surprising. This is because when teachers discover that they have opportunity to grow on the job and also improve their status in the profession and the society they are happy, it acts as a moral booster to them. This finding is in agreement with Garuba (2006) who is of the opinion that continues professional development boosts morale of teacher as it is capable of improving their status in the society. Also it is an avenue for teachers to acquire higher educational qualification. All these are to ensure that teachers develop enough skills for effective teaching for the attainment of sustainability.

That the development programmes assist teachers to acquire effective and sustainable teaching pedagogies is because through this programme the teachers acquire new knowledge about their lesson contents and related pedagogies that will enable them address the needs of diverse learners in the various contents, create optimal conditions for achievement and be committed to lifelong learning. This finding is in line with Laver, Dean, Gleen and Asensio (2005) who stated that

we need teachers who can transform classroom into communities of learners, in which members are challenged to higher level of thinking, to solve problems, to generate questions, and to see data and technology appropriately, see themselves as a source of knowledge, seeking multiple sources of knowledge and successfully use literacy and other skills to learn and interact across disciplines in real world setting.

This implies that, teacher development programmes should ensure that teachers acquire the knowledge required to implement standards based reforms to ensure sustainability.

The study also revealed that both public and private school principals do not have divergent views about the constraints to teacher development programmes. The views have earlier been stated in this write up. That the private school principals scored lack of funds higher than those from public schools could be because, private schools find it difficult to cope with the rigours of supporting their staff financially to proceed for such programmes, since when such teachers leave, they find it difficult to replace them. This could also be the reason for the non challant attitude being exhibited by the teachers. This finding is in agreement with Odoegbulam (2007:17) who reported that constraints to quality professional development of teachers include lack of fund and non challant attitude on the part of some administrators about teachers welfare.

Finally, the study revealed that there should be emphasis placed in the area of ICT, this is to enable teachers to be abreast with the current trend or present information society. This finding is in line with Iji (2006) who stated that teacher education programmes must be taken seriously, since it would act as a major catalyst for educational reform by preparing to effectively use ICTs in the classroom. The implication is that teachers development programme must be modeled in such a way that there is adequate integration of ICTs throughout the duration of the training programme. The principals also suggested exposure to modern pedagogies to enable the teachers to assist students in entrepreneurial skills which is grossly needed to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges. This is in support of Oyeyinka and Adeniji (2006) who stated that there should be tougher curriculum demand in the area of pedagogy in teacher education. Principals also suggested that there is need for the State, Local Government and the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) to provide support for this programme. This is because without their support the programme would fail to thrive. Indeed their involvement for successful teacher development programme and school reform is perhaps more important than any other form of collaboration. This is because, one of the indicators of effective teaching and learning is that there must be good school- community relationship.

## Conclusion

Teacher development for sustainability serves a variety of functions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century school system. It helps to expand the teachers and principals' knowledge base about realities of teaching and learning. It helps to develop new attitudes about students' capabilities, teacher roles and the use of ICT to contributing to student's growth. The principals' need to ensure that the teachers serving under them are encouraged to upgrade their standards for quality to be attained, by so doing they are providing invaluable opportunity for contributing to education for sustainable development. The teachers in Abia State secondary schools may only be able to achieve quality education if they are fully motivated by improving in their learning environment, providing funds, introducing them to ICT and learning pedagogies, through attending development programmes. This is because, teacher development programmes will undoubtedly be more effective if the physical setting and the environment setting provided in the school support it.

## Recommendations

1. Principals should be current and knowledgeable in various academic disciplines and should



encourage teachers by motivating them to always thinking of upgrading their skills.

2. The Government (Local, State as well as PTA) should provide full support by way of funding staff development programmes.

3. Institutions in charge of teacher development programmes should provide a variety of continuing teacher development programmes for serving teachers with emphasis on non award bearing (workshops, seminars etcetera) continuing development for existing teachers.

4. Teacher development programmes must integrate ICTs throughout the duration of the programme.

5. Allowances should be given to serving teachers to motivate them to proceed for development programme.

6. Short term programmes, for example (workshops, symposia, seminars and any programme designed to enhance teacher competency by exposing them to new ideas) should be organized on critical areas of need to be designed by teacher development institutions.

7. The Government should institute a policy on teacher development that will make it compulsory for teachers after serving for two years to proceed on a development programme.

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